

GROWN WISER.
I used to watch her girlish head.
Bend over work; the sunlight stole
To touch her wayward hair and spread
A soft encircling aureole.
She looked so slight, so innocent!
I thought at twenty-one or so,
With all sufficient self-content,
I knew so much she did not know.
For men grow old in knowing, taught
By evil things as well as good.
My little world, I thought,
And her gentle solitude.
But now, at twenty-four, there lies
Such wisdom won of joy and pain,
Deep shining in her quiet eyes,
As I may never more attain.
I might not learn it, if I would.
This strange sweet thing she understands.
It came to her with motherhood,
And my touch of baby hands.
—Harris R. Goings in Ladies' Home Journal.

RISE IN TROUSERS.

I was about to leave my office to go to breakfast when the office boy brought me a leaf torn from the block which is always to be found in the antechambers of newspapers offices and upon which was written, "Louis Demare." I knew the man well. We were fellow workmen and had come up to Paris together. Fortune had frowned upon him. I would like to say that I was out, but I well knew what he was doing, sitting at such an hour. He would only have to wait on the sidewalk until his master should drive me out. I resigned myself to admitting him.

"Show him in, Martin," said I to the boy. "As the gentleman has probably come to borrow, here is some money. If you will ask him to lend me some, give this to me and say that it is all you have."

"You're dead right to be fly with me," answered the boy. "He looks as he was on his uppers, and his pants is."

Demare came briskly into the office. "Well, old boy," he said before I had time to open my lips, "I have come to borrow. But this is an exceptional case. I am not going to say that I have not had a good meal for a week, nor that I need 50 louis to pay a debt of honor, nor 50 francs to pay for a carriage ride for two. I want just 1 louis, or, I need precisely that amount. Just 18 and twenty francs. I have enough to match that and pay for my breakfast in a bargain," and he really showed me three 20 franc pieces. "This louis I will return to you this evening before dinner time. As my demand may seem a little extravagant, I will help you out by promising that if I do not bring the money back before 7 tonight you may instruct your boys to kick me off the premises if I ever show myself here again. Shall I sign that agreement? You know that I would not for the world cut off the source of so many benefits by not keeping my word. I regret that I cannot tell you exactly what disposition I am to make of your louis. I can only tell you that I am to use it in a commercial enterprise that is a daisy—you hear, 'jim dandy'!"

The fellow made me laugh in spite of myself. I was completely disarmed. I gave him his louis, and I truly believe I should have invited him to breakfast with me if he had not been so meanly dressed. But with such trousers it was an impossibility.

Promptly at 7 o'clock the boy announced, with a show of respect:

"Mr. Demare."

"Fithful to my agreement," said he gayly. "Here is your yellow boy. As I know you are busy, I will go, but not without thanking you most heartily."

"Was your 'jim dandy' a success?" I inquired.

"Decidedly," said he, showing me a handful of money.

"Allow me to compliment you," I said. "You must have been playing the game."

"I am not foolish enough for that," he replied.

I noticed he wore new trousers, which must have cost him \$4 or \$5. That explained the increased respect of the office boy. Surely the fellow had not wasted his day.

The next day he brought me an article on some of our city institutions. It was interesting, and I accepted it. When he went out, I noticed that he wore new trousers and different ones from those he had worn the day before. Two days later he called for the pay for his article. He came up to shake hands with me on going away. Mechanically I glanced at his trousers—he had on a third pair, and they were perfectly new.

I met him often in the succeeding days in the office and outside, and on every occasion he wore a fresh pair of trousers. Curiously enough, he always wore the same coat, which was shabby in the extreme.

I gradually contracted the habit of looking at men's trousers. After a vague examination, lasting for several successive days, of the nether garments of all the employees about the office from the proofreaders down to the janitors, I discovered to my stupefaction that none of these persons of slender incomes wore the same pair of trousers two days in succession. Some of them even changed twice a day.

I became convinced that I was the victim of a special hallucination, and I resolved carefully to conceal my malady, as it would have rendered me extremely ridiculous. Still I felt that it would affect me greatly, as it would induce melancholy and become a monomania.

Still the trousers filed before my eyes. They were of all colors and of all shapes. Some fitted their wearers, others were a little too small or a little too large. They were evidently ready made goods, but an enormous quantity of trousers my diseased imagination seemed to have seen!

I seriously thought of making my will; but persuaded of my infirmity, I knew it would be worthless and would only lead to exposure. With the greatest secrecy I consulted a specialist—not a specialist in trousers, but in mental disorders. He showed no surprise at this form of mental disorder, talked of neu-

asthenia, overwork and so on, and charged me 3 louis.

I began to feel that my days were numbered. Every one remarked the change in my health. One of the contributors brought me a curious article, it being a history of trousers, past and present. I threw the article into the wastebasket and came near breaking with the unlucky author.

Just as I was about to arrange my business for a long vacation, having decided to make a sea voyage and travel in foreign lands, where my nightmare would not appear to haunt me—the highlands of Scotland, for instance, or in central Africa—the office boy—he wore a fresh pair of trousers—ushered Demare into my presence with the most profound deference without even announcing him.

At the first glance I saw that he wore a "hitherto unpublished" pair of trousers. Of course I expected that, but what I considered as a sudden aggravation of my malady was that he wore a new coat. If coats were going to mix themselves with trousers in my poor sick brain, there was nothing left for me but to arrange the details of my funeral.

With a haggard face, I pointed to a chair.

"Old man," said he, "knowing that you take an interest in me, I have come to tell you good news. I am engaged permanently as financial editor of The Gazette. So we are coworkers. Congratulate me."

I murmured some feeble words of felicitation.

"I owe you some explanation of my prosperity in the last few months," he added. "You remember the day I borrowed the louis from you and returned it the same evening? I told you at the time it was for a daisy financial stroke. Now that my self interest does not compel me to keep the professional secret, I will tell you all. It is a pretty byplay in metropolitan life. No, my boy, I have not assassinated any old woman who was encumbered with a rent roll. I have not been adopted by an elderly heiress. I have sold no political secret nor pilfered an embassy. I have simply been a dealer in trousers."

At the last word I bounded to my feet. There was my nightmare again.

"Calm yourself," said he, "and listen."

"The day before I made the demand upon your purse I happened to be present at the first day's sale at auction of an immense stock of new goods from a bankrupt custom made clothing concern. The programme for the succeeding days was the sale of 10,000 pairs of trousers. There were few at the sale, the necessity of taking the goods by lots, on account of the great quantity, shutting out workmen and the class of persons who wear such garments. I remarked that the trousers in lots of 10 cost about 2 francs each.

"By dire experience I know that the pawnbroker lends upward of 5 francs on a pair of trousers in good condition.

The thing to do was plain enough to be seen. With your louis I bid off a lot of 10. Soon after I hastened to the pawnshop, where I offered three pairs. I encountered an obstacle the first thing.

They do not lend on unworn garments. I argued my case with such eloquence, representing that I had worn the trousers, but that I was very careful of my clothes, that I gained my point. Of course I could prove that I was not a tailor seeking to dispose of my stock. I took two other lots of 10 at intervals during the day, keeping the tenth pair for myself. I received over a dollar apiece for them. So you see it was a pretty good day's transaction.

The next day I bid off two lots, and profiting by my experience I passed the day and part of the night in wearing the trousers, putting on one pair after another. I can assure you it was back breaking. I then conceived the idea of having others wear them for me, and timidly at first, but soon boldly enough, I lent the garments day by day to your boys, to your clerks and to many others, asking nothing in return but discretion. I told them that I needed to have actual proof of their quality, as they were made in great numbers in my shop for shipment to South America. As my business increased I perfected my methods. I employed agents to dispose of the trousers. I bought as many as 60 some days.

"All went well so long as the source of my prosperity remained undiscovered. One day I scented danger. One of my agents found out by the mark on the buttons where the goods came from, and he bought a lot of 10. I did not hesitate a moment.

"I hunted up the receivers of the stock. I told them that there were 3,000 pairs of trousers unsold; that the 7,000 pairs already sold (I had bought 5,000) had overstocked the buyer, and hence the present price could not hold. It would be wiser to sell them all at once.

In conclusion, I offered them 3,000 francs for the lot of 3,000. The deal was closed, and so all attempts at competition were effectively prevented. At the same time I laid myself liable to the law which punishes monopolies.

"Now it is all over with. The pawnshop gluttoned with trousers, rebelled and threatened my agents with arrest. Eight thousand of my garments rest on their shelves, so I did not complain. In the end I was obliged to carry my business into the provinces. Each pair of trousers has brought me on an average a net of \$1; total, \$8,000. I will lend it to you if you want to borrow.

"Now that it is not necessary for me to affect poverty, I have bought me a coat and some other furnishings. I still have left about 100 pairs of trousers. I shall give some in charity, and I have already fitted out your entire establishment. You must notice how I am represented around here."

"Now, old man, I shall be most happy to send you a pair made to fit you perfectly of the richest fabric. You have only to say the word."

It is needless to add that my cure was instantaneous and complete. —Translated for San Francisco Argonaut From the French of M. Champimont.

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